

VIEW OF THE QUADRANGLE, ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL.



ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL.

At page 42 of the present volume, we noticed the foundation of this establishment, and presented an engraving of the principal gateway in Smithfield. We now furnish a view of the quadrangle and a view of the gateway in Giltspur-street. The hospital commenced by Gibbs in 1730, as we have already mentioned, consists of four piles of buildings around a court, connected by stone gateways at the angles. The buildings are all faced with stone, have dressings around the door and window openings, and are terminated by a cornice and balustrade. Although plain and unpretending, there is a considerable degree of elegance about the arrangement of these fronts, but they are not in a fit state to be judged of.

An inscription on the hospital, after setting forth the date of its foundation and of the reconstruction of the edifice in the 18th century, states, that a general repair was commenced in 1814, and finished in 1820, under the direction of Thomas Hardwick, Esq. Looking, however, at the fronts of the building, it hardly seems credible that it was repaired so recently. The stone work is more decayed and dilapidated than that of many buildings centuries old. The window-heads are broken, the cornices decayed, and the whole front disfigured, the certain result of the use of Bath stone. All over the surface may be observed a sort of eruption, the operation of which is to throw off layers of

the stone. It appears in the first instance, in the shape of slight swellings, which, increasing in size, gradually meet, when they burst and the crust falls off. A punster might take it for a small-pox hospital. The matter, however, is too serious for joking, and should serve as a warning to living architects. There is actually danger in allowing the stone-work to remain as it is, and something must speedily be done to remedy it, or the fall of some of the outside will furnish the inside with inmates. It was recently proposed to rase the whole of the exterior with Portland stone, simply cutting away such parts of the present work as might be necessary to obtain good fixing. The object of that mode of proceeding was of course to avoid throwing open any part of the building, and so interfering with the patients.

The gateway in Smithfield, and that of which we now give a view,* are constructed of Portland stone, and present a striking contrast to the main building, being perfectly sound and whole, although of earlier date. Eight or ten years ago, the sides and back of the first gateway were cased with stone, by Mr. Malton, in consequence of the removal of the houses which, until that time, adjoined it, but few or no repairs were required to the existing stone-work, or even to the figures sculptured in it. According to Mr. Malton's opinion, indeed, and as a practical mason who has been engaged for fifty years in repairing old churches and raising new buildings (the Post Office,

National Gallery, &c.), he is entitled to consideration,—good Portland stone never decays, although the surface may be worn by long exposure to the weather.

The gateway in Giltspur-street is Roman-Doric, and presents four attached columns on a rusticated basement, supporting an entablature and pediment, and having two tiers of windows between them: the centre intercolumniation is wider than the others are, and admits a Venetian window in the lower part.

Attached to the hospital is the church of St. Bartholomew the Less, formerly the chapel of the establishment. The interior of it is curious, although little of the old building remains. In plan it was originally square; but George Dance, the architect, in 1789, having first destroyed the interior of the old building, formed it into an octagon, chiefly with timber. It was re-constructed on this same plan in 1823 by Mr. Thomas Hardwick, who substituted stone. The roof is of iron.

Returning to the hospital, it may be stated that no mention is made of it in the volume of designs which Gibbs published, although the second edition of this collection did not appear till some time after the commencement of the works, namely 1739. Gibbs, a favourite of fortune when alive, was considerably under-rated afterwards, and at this time is hardly so well estimated as he deserves to be. A memoir of him will be found in the first volume of *THE BUILDER*, p. 203.

* This illustration is not so satisfactory as was desired, and would have been cancelled if time had permitted.